

IDAHO SOIL CONSERVATION COMMISSION CONSERVATION IMPROVEMENT GRANTS

Policy Guidelines

The Soil Conservation Commission (Commission) is authorized by the Idaho Legislature to finance grants for conservation improvements. This grant program is administered by the Commission in cooperation with Idaho's 51 local Soil Conservation Districts.

I. Purpose: The purpose of the Conservation Improvement Grant program is to provide financial assistance to eligible applicants for the implementation of natural resource conservation projects. The Commission will select projects which, in their best judgment, have the greatest public benefit and conservation impact. Grant applications may be considered for the purpose of demonstrating new, and/or innovative conservation improvements. These types of projects will include:

- A. Conservation of soil and water resources
- B. Improvement of water quality and protection of beneficial uses
- C. Efficient use of Idaho's water resources
- D. Improvement in riparian area conditions
- E. Protection and enhancement of fish and wildlife habitat

II. Eligibility:

- A. All private and public land within Idaho
- B. Any individual, partnership, association, trust, estate, private corporation or other legal entity
- C. Installation of new conservation improvement practices or systems
- D. Work in progress prior to approval is not eligible

III. Terms:

- A. Grants are limited to \$10,000, unless otherwise authorized by the Commission.
- B. Soil Conservation Districts (Districts) submitting multiple applications will assign a numerical ranking to the applications.
- C. Grants may be considered in conjunction with RCRDP loan applications.

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- D. Grant funds must be matched equally in the form of cash, materials, labor or use of equipment for practice installation. This match may not consist of funds from another cost-share program, or labor and equipment use from federal, state, county, or local units of government.
- E. Match must be supported by invoices and receipts. Labor, equipment, and machinery match must show hours and hourly rate. Hourly rates must be reasonable and consistent with local wage and custom rental rates.
- F. All practices must be installed within one year of execution of the grant agreement, unless otherwise authorized by the Commission.
- G. Grantee must agree to maintain the installed practices for the practice life span as established by the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and allow ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the improvements

IV. Application Priorities:

- 1. The first component of establishing a grant priority is based upon the Commission's natural resource conservation objectives. A higher rank shall be assessed based upon the following criteria, listed in respective order of priority:
 - i. Priority #1 - Proposed project impacts a 303(d) listed stream with a completed TMDL
 - ii. Priority #2 - Proposed project impacts a tributary of a 303(d) listed stream with a completed TMDL
 - iii. Priority #3 - Proposed project impacts a 303(d) listed stream or tributary of a 303(d) listed stream without a completed TMDL
 - iv. Priority #4 - Project does not directly or indirectly impact a 303(d) listed stream or its tributaries but does utilize Best Management Practices and achieves conservation of natural resources
- 2. The second component of establishing a grant priority is based upon the sponsoring District's natural resource conservation objectives. Before the Commission processes an application, the District shall assess the project and issue a ranking of High, Medium, or Low, based upon the project's conformity to the District's objectives.

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V. Application Procedures:

- A. Complete a Conservation Improvement Grant application, available from the local Soil Conservation District, or from the Commission website at scc.idaho.gov
- B. Prepare a conservation plan in conjunction with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, or another appropriate technical entity
- C. Submit the completed application and conservation plan to the local Soil Conservation District. The District will establish a priority for the application, and forward it to the Commission
- D. Grant applications must be received in the Commission Boise office three weeks prior to a Commission meeting for review at that meeting. Commission meetings are held bimonthly (every two months). If the application meets the basic policy criteria, the Commission will review the application at the next formal meeting.
- E. Projects will be approved by the Commission which, in their best judgment, would have the greatest public benefit and positive impact on natural resources
- F. If approved by the Commission, the applicant must sign a grant agreement, specifying the conditions of the grant